Yukon Housing Corporation

Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018

November 29, 2012

YUKON HOUSING CORPORATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-18

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

The Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) was established in 1972 under the *Housing Corporation Act*. YHC has a broad mandate to address the housing needs of Yukoners, and develops and administers a variety of programs and services to support the mandate as set out in the Act.

The Corporation is accountable to the citizens of Yukon through its Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of a Chair, a Deputy Chair and Directors appointed by the Commissioner in Executive Council of the Yukon government. The Board is in turn responsible to the Legislative Assembly through the Minister Responsible.

The housing environment in Yukon is both dynamic and complex and the Corporation needs to think strategically about fulfilling its broad mandate in the most effective and fiscally prudent ways possible. Through the strategic planning process we intend to define what the Corporation wants to achieve over the next five years, and set the coherent direction to be followed in the Corporation's Annual Operational Plans. In that respect, the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan that follows should serve to:

- Ensure that the priorities of the YHC support and reflect the plans and priorities of the Yukon government;
- Delineate where YHC is going and what it is doing;
- Establish a clear basis for prioritizing decisions;

- Enhance the framework for accountability and enable measurements of effectiveness; and

- Clearly guide the development of annual operational plans, budget preparation and organizational growth and development.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process. It provides an important platform for managing the Corporation, and this platform will be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis.

We hope that this document will be informative and useful to you.

Claire Derome
Chair, Yukon Housing Corporation

YUKON HOUSING CORPORATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

Context for Strategic Planning

In developing this 5-Year Strategic Plan, the Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) undertook a comprehensive analysis of its external and internal operating environments, and looked at the continuum of housing needs with a particular focus on the growing need for affordable and attainable accommodation. The review included assessing YHC's governance and accountability framework, policy and program development capacity. The external environmental scan evaluated the state of Yukon's economy, market trends and challenges and housing initiatives in other jurisdictions.

This Strategic Plan builds on a foundation of established programs and services delivered by the Corporation. The Corporation's existing core business lines include:

1. Loans Programs;
2. Social Housing for non-Seniors and Seniors;
3. Staff Housing;
4. Providing education and training to industry and the public on matters related to housing; and
5. Capital Projects.

These programs and services delivered by the YHC represent the Yukon government's most significant intervention in the Yukon housing environment. The fundamental premise is that there are certain programs and services that government can, and should, deliver to help address the housing needs of Yukoners.

Within this context, YHC's overall operational philosophy is based on the following commitments:

- YHC strategic plans and annual implementation plans will be compatible with, and support the Yukon government's priorities and objectives.

- The Corporation recognizes and is sensitive to its potential influence in the housing marketplace.

- The Corporation is outcome driven and, because revenues are limited, will focus its efforts on strategic priorities.

- The Corporation will actively seek out partnerships to resolve housing issues.

- The Corporation will be proactive in developing new housing initiatives and will assume a lead role in assessing Yukon government and federal government policies affecting housing in Yukon.

- The Corporation will evaluate its programs and services to ensure its business lines are responsive to new and emerging housing issues.

This Strategic Plan represents the collective work of the Corporation's staff and Board of Directors and includes input from a number of the Corporation's stakeholders and interest groups. The goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan also reflect and support the commitments described in the 2012 Mandate Letter provided by the Premier to the Minister Responsible for the Housing Corporation, as well as the initiatives identified in the Annual Protocol and Letter of Expectations negotiated between the Minister and the Board of Directors. The goals and objectives in this Plan intend to support the creation of a healthy, well maintained and attainable housing[1] environment in Yukon supported by an energized and responsive Yukon Housing Corporation. However, the Plan goes beyond what the Corporation and the Government of Yukon can do alone to improve the suitability, accessibility and range of housing choices in Yukon. The Strategic Plan must also serve as a catalyst that

encourages all elements of the housing sector to work together with the Corporation on collaborative solutions to meet the diverse housing needs. This will include working with other government departments, federal, local and First Nations governments, Non-Government Organizations and the Private Sector.

As the implementation of the Strategic Plan progresses over the next five years, the Board of Directors will annually review and update the Plan to ensure that new and emerging challenges are effectively addressed. The Corporation welcomes the views of its partners and invites them to work together with staff to help deliver improved housing options for Yukoners.

The Yukon Housing Context

Housing serves as a fundamental pillar in support of a community's socio-economic vibrancy and stability. In Yukon, the majority of people are housed successfully in the private housing market, and even with the rising cost of owning or renting a house, the private market continues to meet a significant proportion of housing needs. YHC's focused role in this segment of the housing continuum has been to support the private market where required through the Loans Programs and technology transfer initiatives to ensure the private market functions as effectively as possible.

For those in greatest need of social or seniors' housing, the Yukon government delivers an extensive social housing program and has recently accessed federal government funding programs to make additional social housing possible. Between 2006 and 2011, the Yukon government has constructed over $90 million of social and affordable housing units. This includes nearly $37 million from 2005 to 2008 for seniors' housing in Haines Junction and Whitehorse along with affordable housing for students at Yukon College. It also includes over $55 million which has been spent since 2009 under the federal government's Economic Stimulus housing program on construction of new social and seniors' housing units as well as repairs to existing units. The Yukon

Housing Corporation has also invested $1.9 million in repair, modification and construction of staff housing units during the same period.

As of March 2011, the Yukon Housing Corporation managed a total of 775 social and staff housing units compared to 658 in 2006. That increase represented an 18 percent growth in the number of units compared to a population growth of 11.6 percent for Yukon and a 13.8 percent population growth for Whitehorse over that same five year period. During that same time period, the number of private Yukon dwellings[2] increased by 6.3 percent to 16,259 and for Whitehorse by 11.8 percent to 9,648 dwellings. As of March 2012, the total number of units under Yukon Housing Corporation management had increased to 822 or by six percent over March 2011. Of these units, 669 are social units and 153 are staff housing units.

Yukon Housing continues to add social units either directly or in partnership with non-profit societies. In August 2012, Yukon Housing announced an investment of $12.65 million, with $9 million coming from the Yukon government, to build 34 social units for low income seniors in Whitehorse. Yukon Housing also made available over $3 million to the Options for Independence Society, of which $1 million is a grant from the federal government, for a new housing complex for people living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This will provide 14 new units for this special needs clientele.

These federal funds, supplemented by Yukon Housing dollars and capital construction oversight, have started to address important gaps in the housing continuum[3]. However, Yukon's vibrant economy has also made attainable accommodation, to rent or purchase, more challenging to find, particularly in Whitehorse and surrounding areas.

The attainability challenge is further impacted by the federal government's new restrictions on insured mortgages financed by the Canada Mortgage and

Housing Corporation (CMHC). As of July 9, 2012, the maximum amortization period has been reduced to 25 years from 30. This effectively reduces the purchasing power of prospective home buyers.

Given this background context, an important focus of the Yukon Housing Corporation's Strategic Plan will consist of setting goals and objectives to help alleviate the most pressing home ownership and rental availability gaps and attainability challenges in Yukon. The Strategic Plan is also sensitive to the need to address government's role across the housing continuum, including the need for supportive living and program based housing initiatives.

Glossary of Terms

[1] For the purposes of this Report, "attainable housing" refers to accommodation that is affordable, accessible and attainable. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing is considered to be affordable if it costs less than 32 percent of the before-tax total household income. Housing costs include mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes and utilities.

[2] Statistics Canada defines a "dwelling" as a set of living quarters designed for or converted for human habitation in which a person or group of persons reside or could reside. In addition, a 'private dwelling' must have a source of heat or power and must be an enclosed space that provides shelter from the elements.

[3] The term "housing continuum" refers to the range of housing needs that extend from supportive living arrangements to the need for attainable rental accommodation and home ownership.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES AND STRATEGIC GOALS

OUR MANDATE

Our mandate is to undertake programs and activities related to the provision of housing in Yukon as set out in the *Housing Corporation Act,* the *Government Employee Housing Plan Act* and the *Housing Development Act*. In carrying out our mandate, we are guided by our Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals and Values.

OUR MISSION – *What We Do*

We work to resolve existing and emerging housing challenges in Yukon by providing social, senior and staff housing, as well as other programs to assist Yukoners to build, purchase, upgrade and repair their homes. We support Yukoners most in need to find and maintain suitable and attainable accommodation and we collaborate with all levels of government, non-profit organizations and other parties to find innovative housing solutions.

Our mission statement sets out the role that the
Yukon Housing Corporation plays in achieving its vision.
It defines the business we are in and the people we serve.

OUR VISION – *Where We Are Going*

Our vision is for a healthy, well maintained and attainable housing environment in Yukon that offers a range of housing choices to meet the needs of all Yukoners.

Our vision statement outlines the ideal future state
that the Yukon Housing Corporation is working to achieve.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS – *How We Get There*

1. Facilitate access to more attainable and sustainable home ownership in Yukon.

2. Support initiatives to increase the availability and affordability of rental accommodation in Yukon.

3. Develop strategic partnerships with Yukon government departments, other governments, non-government organizations and the private sector, in pursuit of collaborative initiatives to enhance the full range of choices along the housing continuum in Yukon.

4. Work to continually improve the Corporation's organizational effectiveness and accountability framework to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Corporation's established and newly created or enhanced programs.

5. Ensure adequate human resources planning and capacity to support the strategic goals and operational plans of the Corporation.

Strategic goals describe desired outcomes that are supportive of the Mission and Vision and point the way forward.

OUR VALUES – *What We Believe and What We Strive For*

Professionalism

- We make timely and well-informed decisions.
- We are dedicated to meeting the legitimate program needs of our clients.
- We integrate health, safety and wellness into our daily work lives.

Integrity

- We work in a manner that ensures accountability and builds trust.
- We are fair, open and honest.

Innovation

- We are proactive in recognizing and supporting creative solutions.
- We value innovation and continuous improvement.
- We share and apply our knowledge for the benefit of all Yukoners.

Respect

- We acknowledge the diversity of values, needs and interests of Yukon people.
- We work together in an environment of mutual respect to achieve results and build relationships.
- We communicate openly and honestly.
- We support balance between our professional and personal lives.

Our core values are meant to apply
throughout the Yukon Housing Corporation, including to
all staff members and the Board of Directors.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The YHC will accomplish its Mission and deliver its Vision over the next five years through the achievement of the five Strategic Goals outlined below. How each of the goals will be achieved is described by the objectives under each goal.

Strategic Goal 1:

Facilitate access to more attainable and sustainable home ownership opportunities in Yukon.

Our Challenge:

Attainable home ownership is an integral part of building a vibrant, healthy Yukon and strengthening the economy, our communities and most importantly, our citizens. However, current market conditions are precluding a growing number of working Yukoners from entering the home ownership market. Too often, this issue is exacerbated by higher cost of living, including increased rent payments that leave little ability for working Yukoners to save for a down payment to purchase a home. The challenge of affordability can also impact the sustainability of home ownership. Low to moderate income households, including fixed income households, can be challenged to retain their home ownership status due to rising energy costs, taxes, home repair and maintenance costs, and general cost of living increases. It should also be underscored that the state of home repair and maintenance costs continue to be very problematic in Yukon's rural communities.

In rural Yukon, availability and affordability of home ownership also presents unique challenges. Based on Yukon Bureau of Statistics population projections, it is estimated that over the next decade many new homes will be required to address the housing needs in rural Yukon. This will be a significant challenge for rural communities and YHC, as conventional bank mortgages have not been readily available for the construction of rural housing.

Our Approach:

To accomplish Strategic Goal 1, the Corporation will meet the following objectives:

(1.1) Evaluate options to re-design or expand the existing Loans Programs, including the Extended Mortgage Guarantee Program, to address critical housing affordability needs in Yukon.

(1.2) Create and deliver a comprehensive pre and post home purchase financial literacy and mentoring training program for home purchasers in Yukon.

(1.3) Assess options to provide enhanced assistance to home owners to have structural repairs and/or energy efficiency upgrades carried out in their privately owned homes.

(1.4) Explore fiscally responsible options to assist Yukoners who are in social housing to own their own homes.

(1.5) Establish a rural community outreach program and marketing strategy to improve the awareness, uptake and applicability of YHC programs and services in rural Yukon, and enhance these programs where necessary and practicable.

Strategic Goal 2:

Support initiatives to increase the availability and affordability of rental accommodation in Yukon.

Our Challenge:

Many low and moderate income individuals, families and senior households lack adequate income to pay rent at private market rates. There is a significant gap

between their rent and what they can realistically afford to pay. This gap further restricts the ability of working Yukoners to save for a down payment to purchase a home, thereby ensuring that mobility throughout the housing continuum remains relatively static.

This rental challenge is in part a reflection of the fact that, like elsewhere in Canada, very few purpose built apartments have been constructed in Yukon in the past 15 years, and some older apartment buildings are now being converted to strata-title condominiums. This lack of new supply has had an impact on competition in the private market, with rental rate increases being a natural economic outcome given the demand for rental accommodation in Whitehorse.

One of the most pressing needs for affordable rental accommodation is among low income people who have special housing and/or support program needs. These individuals and families are often not readily accommodated in the private sector market. In order to live independently and participate in community life, some individuals require government-funded support services and/or a home that has been designed to provide barrier free accessibility and mobility.

The issue of rental housing for Yukon government employees in rural communities was identified as a major issue in the Auditor General's 2010 Performance Audit, *"Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly – February 2010"*. Affordable rental accommodation is provided to Yukon government employees to help ensure the recruitment and retention of qualified employees to deliver government programs and services in rural Yukon. However, it is clear that the demands upon staff housing in the communities exceed the available housing supply, and that many of the existing units are in need of upgrades.

Our Approach:

To accomplish Strategic Goal 2, the Corporation will meet the following objectives:

(2.1) Work with other levels of government to lead the development of innovative incentives to stimulate private sector investment in new purpose built attainable rental accommodation in Yukon.

(2.2) Assess opportunities to collaborate with the private sector to create mixed market housing in Yukon.

(2.3) Explore options to provide enhanced incentives to homeowners to build a rental suite or upgrade an existing suite to Yukon government's housing code in their privately owned homes.

(2.4) Work with all affected Yukon government departments to develop and cost out a housing management plan that would undertake to address staff housing requirements in Yukon's rural communities.

(2.5) Review the Corporation's social housing programs and rental facilities to ensure they are responding appropriately to the financial difficulties, physical mobility challenges or other identified needs of the Corporation's client groups.

Strategic Goal 3:

Develop strategic partnerships with Yukon government departments, other governments, non-government organizations and the private sector in pursuit of collaborative initiatives to enhance the full range of choices along the housing continuum in Yukon.

Our Challenge:

The Strategic Plan must be about more than what the Government of Yukon can do alone to address the housing challenges in Yukon. The Plan must serve as a catalyst for collaboration and allow for all elements of the housing sector and related support agencies and NGOs to work together with government. Further,

the Strategic Plan must seek opportunities to engage the federal government in supporting new approaches to housing north of the 60th parallel.

Our Approach:

To accomplish Strategic Goal 3, the Corporation will meet the following objectives:

(3.1) Strengthen and formalize our relationships with First Nation and local governments to identify collaborative residential land development opportunities.

(3.2) In collaboration with industry, promote the transfer of improved housing technology and design alternatives through demonstration projects, training and marketing of knowledge and resource materials.

(3.3) Lead the development of a pan-northern partnership with other territorial governments in order to facilitate dialogue with the federal government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on a new approach for northern housing.

(3.4) Enhance coordination and integration of programs and services between government departments as well as other government partners and NGOs to support self-reliance and supportive living options.

Strategic Goal 4:

Work to continually improve the Corporation's organizational effectiveness and accountability framework to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Corporation's established and newly created programs.

Our Challenge:

YHC works in a very dynamic and complex environment. What may have worked 10 years ago or even five years ago, is not sufficient for the complexities of today's housing needs. The organization needs to be responsive to this environment. The Corporation must be capable of adapting to new and emerging market trends, new demands and challenges and changing political priorities. Organizational design, policies and programs must be consistent with strategic goals. Corporate culture must strive to embrace the core values identified in this Strategic Plan.

Our Approach:

To accomplish Strategic Goal 4, the Corporation will meet the following objectives:

(4.1) Ensure that the Corporation's governance and accountability framework is clearly articulated, consistent with all applicable legislation and provides for operational clarity, including consistency in program delivery procedures and guidelines.

(4.2) Map the Corporation's organizational structure and current business process models, identify gaps and areas for improvement and establish appropriate change management strategies.

(4.3) Develop Annual Implementation Plans that will incorporate and track progress on the outstanding commitments from the Performance Audit conducted by the Auditor General, "Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly - February 2010", as well as the Annual Protocol and Letter of Expectations and the 2013-18 Strategic Plan approved by the YHC Board of Directors, and report progress in the Corporation's Annual Report.

(4.4) Review the mandate of the Whitehorse Housing Authority and other community housing advisory boards to ensure clarity in their relationship with the YHC Board.

Strategic Goal 5:

Ensure adequate human resources planning and capacity to support the strategic goals and operational plans of the Corporation.

Our Challenge:

Given demographics and the labour market, there is no doubt that attracting and retaining talent, optimizing performance and building capacity are among the top human resource challenges for Canada, the Yukon government and the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Central to our success will be the ongoing creation of an organizational culture which respects, involves and empowers employees so that they can successfully deliver the Corporation's mandate.

Our Approach:

To accomplish Strategic Goal 5, the Corporation will meet the following objectives:

(5.1) Establish a proactive approach to YHC's human resource needs in order to ensure human resource alignment with the strategic and operational goals and objectives.

(5.2) Continue to foster a shared responsibility amongst all employees to ensure a safe, healthy and respectful work environment.

(5.3) Establish appropriate training programs, including orientation training, for all employees, YHC Board and Community Housing Board members that would be delivered on a consistent basis.

(5.4) Strive for management excellence within all levels of the Corporation.